



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Region 6

1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200

Dallas, TX 75202-2733

January 27, 2014

Alan Mitchnick
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Office of Energy Projects
888 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20426

Mr. Mitchnick,

In accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act (CAA), the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 office in Dallas, Texas, has completed its review of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Toledo Bend Hydroelectric Project prepared by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). The project proposes to construct a 1.3-megawatt (MW) horizontal Francis minimum flow turbine-generator located downstream of the spillway that would increase the project's total generating capacity to 82.3 MW. The proposed installation would replace one spillway tainter gate with a new conventional intake and a steel penstock pipe measuring approximately 460-feet-long to a new powerhouse.

EPA provided comments for the Draft EIS in a letter dated August 5, 2013. EPA rated the DEIS as "EC-2" i.e., EPA has "Environmental Concerns and Requests Additional Information. The rating was based on the potential impacts to Environmental Justice (EJ) communities and aquatic resources.

The response to EPA socioeconomics and EJ comments has not been adequately addressed in the Final EIS. Data from NEPAassist, an environmental review and project-planning tool available at <http://nepassisttool.epa.gov/nepassist/entry.aspx>, indicates high minority census tracts within the project area. Specifically, census tracts near the cities of Zwolle, Louisiana and West Orange, Texas have 72 percent and 83 percent minority populations, respectively. Provide a socioeconomic and EJ analysis for the proposed project in the Record of Decision (ROD).

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review the Final EIS. Please send a copy of the ROD to my attention. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this letter, please contact me at 214-665-8006, or Keith Hayden of my staff at hayden.keith@epa.gov or 214-665-2133 for assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rhonda", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Rhonda Smith
Chief, Office of Planning
and Coordination